

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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Report Highlights:

The first "Taste of America" Restaurant Week in Japan took place in Tokyo between October 3rd and the 16th, 2011;
Concerns over radioactive contamination of farm products continue.

General Information:

The Wasabi

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“Taste of America” Restaurant Week: The first American Restaurant Week in Japan took place in Tokyo between October 3rd and the 16th, 2011. Agricultural Trade Office (ATO) Tokyo approached over 150 restaurants to participate. 55 restaurants participated and created special menus that featured U.S. broccoli, celery, and Romaine lettuce. In order to participate, restaurants were asked to feature two more U.S. agricultural products such as nuts, fruits, meats, seafood, water and alcoholic beverages such as wine and craft beer. The caliber of the restaurants ranged from American themed hamburger and hot dog shops to the luxurious restaurants represented by Nobu Tokyo.



When planning the event, ATO met with the restaurant owners to introduce them to the U.S. agriculture cooperator community and show them U.S. products currently available in the Japanese market. Many young Japanese chefs and restaurant owners who prepare and serve American cuisine have difficulty reaching out to their Japanese customers due to lack of knowledge of U.S. products. Many of the restaurants had no idea that some products were available or where to get them. This is where U.S. cooperator and ATO Tokyo's expertise came in, making contacts, finding suppliers, and providing technical support on how to use the products. The Taste of America program was supported by the V5 (five vegetable) Global Based Initiative (GBI) program through the California Ag Export Council and included the participation of many other U.S. agriculture cooperators.

Concerns over Radioactive Contamination of Farm Products Continue: On October 14, the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare (MHLW) officially banned the shipment of shiitake mushrooms grown both outdoors and indoors in four cities of the Ibaraki Prefecture. The ban was imposed after radioactive cesium higher than permissible levels were found in sampled mushrooms. Shiitake production in the whole Ibaraki Prefecture accounts for approximately 8% of the nation's total, but production in the four cities is fairly limited. On the same day, radioactive cesium higher than permissible levels were also detected in dried shiitake mushrooms in Ito City, in the Shizuoka Prefecture. Prefectural authorities have asked producers to voluntarily refrain from shipping dried mushrooms.



On October 14, radioactive cesium above the permissible limit was detected in dried persimmons (*Anpo Persimmon*) in Date City, in the Fukushima Prefecture. As a result, prefectural authorities have asked producers to voluntarily stop the manufacturing of dried persimmons. *Anpo Persimmon* is a local Fukushima product with an estimated annual production of 3,000 – 4,000 tons.

(Photo: *Anpo* dried persimmons)

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